MINUTES OF MEETING OF COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 15, 1928.

The ninth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1928 was held at the office of Mr. John Russell Pope, Architect, 542 Fifth Avenue, New York City, on Thursday, March 15, 1928.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Delano,
Mr. Garfield,
Mr. Morris,
Mr. Vitale,
also Mr. H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary and Executive Officer.

The special purpose of the meeting was to consider with the former architect and landscape architect members of the Commission of Fine Arts the question of steps and underpass for the Arlington Memorial Bridge at the Lincoln Memorial. Mr. Pope had offered his office as a place of meeting and arrangements were made accordingly. The former architect members of the Commission present were Mr. Pope, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Medary, and Mr. Ayres. Also Mr. Olmsted was present, former landscape architect member of the Commission, a member of the Senate Park Commission of 1901, and now landscape architect member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which also Mr. Medary represented as one of its members.

There were also present Mr. Lawrence Grant White, Mr. F. J. Adams, and Mr. J. O. Vegezzi, architects, of the Office of McKim, Mead and White, architects of the Arlington Memorial Bridge, and Mr. Wm. T. Partridge, representing Lieut. Col. U. S. Grant 3d Executive Officer of the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission.

The secretary had arranged to have a large model illustrating the problem of steps and underpass at the Lincoln Memorial sent by the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission to Mr. Pope's office, and also presented a number of plans, sketches, and views of the Plan of Washington, at the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 10:00 a.m.

ARLINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE, STEPS AND UNDERPASS: Mr. Moore placed before the meeting the following letter from McKim, Mead and White, protesting against the elimination of the steps and making any radical changed in the 1901 plan of the composition (the secretary had furnished each member and former member present with a copy):

March 10, 1928.

"Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

Mr. Vitale presented the views of the members of the Commission who met on March 8th, 1928, concerning the question of the underpass and steps at the Washington end of the Bridge. As we understand it, they were

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HELD IN NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 10, 1928.

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The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Delano,
Mr. Garfield,
Mr. Morris,
Mr. Vitale,

also Mr. H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary and Executive Officer.

The special purpose of the meeting was to consider with the former architect and landscape architect members of the Commission of Fine Arts the location of steps and underpass for the Arlington Memorial Bridge at the Lincoln Memorial. Mr. Pope had offered his office as a place of meeting and arrangements were made accordingly. The former architect members of the Commission present were Mr. Pope, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Hegeman, and Mr. Ayres. Also Mr. Olmsted was present, former landscape architect member of the Commission, a member of the Senate Park Commission of 1901, and now landscape architect member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which also Mr. Olmsted represented as one of its members.

There were also present Mr. Lawrence Grant White, Mr. E. H. Adams, and Mr. C. C. Vegerni, architects, of the office of McKim, Mead and White, architects of the Arlington Memorial Bridge, and Mr. Wm. T. Partridge, representing Lieut. Col. U. S. Grant 3rd, Executive Officer of the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission.

The secretary had arranged to have a large model illustrating the problem of steps and underpass at the Lincoln Memorial sent by the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission to Mr. Pope's office, and also presented a number of plans, sketches, and views of the Plan of Washington, at the meeting.

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March 10, 1928.

"Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

Mr. Vitale presented the views of the members of the Commission who met on March 8th, 1928, concerning the location of the underpass and steps at the Washington end of the Bridge. As we understand it, they were

strongly of the opinion that the steps should be given up entirely, and that the Mall system should end with a parapet on the level of the plaza running from the bridge pylon to the pylon at the entrance to the road to B Street north.

We desire to enter our protest against the abandonment of the steps, which means the abandonment of them not only as a water gate, in our opinion the most important feature of the whole design, but as an approach to the river, which would afford the facilities necessary for those interested in boating and water sports generally. We will remind the Commission that these steps were in the original drawings submitted to the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission in October, 1923. There has been since that time no intimation to us on the part of your Commission of the desire to omit the steps entirely until March 7th, 1928. There have been, however, during the past year, certain suggestions as to their modification, which did not, however, meet with the approval of all the members. The original motive of this change was the alleged difficulty of managing the traffic going up and down the river road. One suggestion was to carry a secondary road under the approach of B Street across the middle of the steps, and under the bridge, thus allowing a certain part of the traffic to pass through without interfering with those vehicles coming across the bridge from the Virginia side. This road we considered, and still do consider a serious injury to the beauty and unity of the steps. Although, if we are not mistaken, the Commission were of our opinion, it was considered that the advantage resulting in the control of the traffic in a great measure offset the injury to the design. We protested strongly against this decision as recorded in our letter of October 3rd, 1927, a copy of which is enclosed.

Later in accordance with the Commission's request, we presented, at the next meeting, a carefully studied design of this modification of the steps, worked out in detail. Those members of the Commission present were unanimously against introducing this road in the middle of the steps, because in their opinion, it not only destroyed the unity of the steps, but introduced a line of traffic through the middle thereby endangering those approaching the river from the plaza above and adding a dangerous element for those using the steps for any purpose whatever. Accordingly the suggestion was made, in order to preserve the steps both for the water gate and for the use of sportsmen, of a tunnel which would allow all those desirous of proceeding as rapidly down the river as possible, to do so, and would leave unimpaired the original design. The interval between these various decisions has usually been very long, sometimes a month or more.

Finally at the meeting held on March 8th, 1928, of which we were not notified, an entirely new solution of the problem has been proposed. This contemplates the abandonment of the steps, and substituting therefor a parapet reaching from the bridge pylon to the pylon towards B Street. This is a very distinct and abrupt departure from the attitude taken by the Commission of Fine Arts in the last four years or more.

In order to show the importance we attach to the river gate, or what might be called the water approach to the City of Washington,

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Finally at the meeting held on March 8th, 1938, of which we were not notified, an entirely new solution of the problem has been proposed. This contemplates the abandonment of the steps, and substituting therefor a precast reaching from the bridge pylon to the Pylon towards 3 Street. This is a very distinct and abrupt departure from the attitude taken by the Commission of Fine Arts in the last four years or more.

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In order to show the importance we attach to the river gate, or what might be called the water approach to the City of Washington,

we quote from the section furnished by us in the report of the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission April 23, 1924:

'The area of the Mall axis at its junction with the Potomac has been treated so as to recognize the importance, both of the final feature of a parkway extending from the Capitol to the Potomac and that of a plaza whence radiate the bridge and the important park roads, including access to the Lincoln Memorial and to the river bank. The bridge and shore road are symmetrically arranged with respect to the continuation of the Mall axis, both the road and the bridge being provided with entrance pylons. A monumental flight of steps between the bridge and the road leads to the river, the whole composition thus forming a water gate giving access through the Mall, with its important monuments, to the Capitol. The steps leading down to the river bank form landing places for small boats, the piers at either end of the steps forming landing places for larger ones.'

We understand that this question is going to be discussed once again at a meeting of the Commission where there will be present a number of former members of the Commission of Fine Arts. In order to put in a concise statement our preference for the various schemes in the Mall system, if our original scheme is to be abandoned we should put--

First - the tunnel leading under the steps, thereby preserving intact the steps as originally designed.

Second - the scheme showing the road passing over a landing in the middle of the steps.

In spite of its harm to the water gate, we should prefer greatly this scheme to the abandonment of the steps entirely.

This is our attitude with regard to the proposed changes. However, we await the decision of the meeting, at which certain of the former members of the Commission will be present.

Yours very truly,
Wm. Mitchell Kendall
Dennis J. VanderBent
Lawrence Grant White.

Enclosure COPY

October 3, 1927.

Lieut. Col. U. S. Grant 3rd, U.S.A.
Executive Officer, Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission,
Navy Building, Washington, D.C.
Dear Sir:

We have received your letter of September 28th, concerning the under-pass on the Washington side of the Arlington Memorial Bridge. We also note the report of the Commission of Fine Arts on this subject. We are greatly disappointed at this decision, as our Mr. Kendall felt that at the meeting no one seemed to have any difference of opinion with regard to which was the better motive for the steps, considered from a purely architectural point of view. The arguments our Mr. Kendall advanced were briefly that as shown

We quote from the motion furnished by us in the report of the Washington Memorial Bridge Commission April 25, 1924:

'The area of the Mall axis at its junction with the Potomac has been treated so as to recognize the importance both of the final feature of a primary extending from the Capitol to the Potomac and that of a plaza where radiate the bridge and the important park roads, including access to the Lincoln Memorial and to the river park. The bridge and more road are symetrically arranged with respect to the continuation of the Mall axis, both the road and the bridge being provided with entrance pylons. A monumental flight of steps between the bridge and the road leads to the river, the whole composition thus forming a water gate giving access through the Mall, with its important monuments, to the Capitol. The steps leading down to the river park form landing places for small boats, the plaza at either end of the steps forming landing places for larger ones.'

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This is our attitude with regard to the proposed change. However, we await the decision of the meeting, at which certain of the former members of the Commission will be present.

Yours very truly,

Mr. Mitchell Woodrell
Dennis J. Vanderpant
Terrence Ernest White.

Enclosure Copy

October 5, 1927.

Lieut. Col. U. S. Grant 3rd, U.S.A.
Executive Officer, Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission,
Navy Building, Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

We have received your letter of September 26th, concerning the under-pass on the Washington side of the Arlington Memorial Bridge. We also note the report of the Commission of Fine Arts on this subject. We are greatly disappointed at this decision, as our Mr. Cordell felt that at the meeting he was asked to have only difference of opinion with regard to which was the better motive for the steps, considered from a purely architectural point of view.

in the model, our original scheme was simpler and had more unity, and that this unity was broken up completely by the introduction of a roadway through the middle of the steps. Also the continual passing through the middle of the steps of a line of automobiles would not only injure artistically the design, but would be a source of great annoyance to those who would be using the steps as an approach to pleasure craft of all kinds. Furthermore, it seemed questionable, in the case of a monument such as this bridge is intended to be, that traffic considerations should have precedence over questions of beauty. The alleged inconvenience of waiting, let us say three-quarters of a minute, the time allowed on Fifth Avenue, New York, would not be so injurious to the enjoyment of the bridge as a defective design. Furthermore, this inconvenience would be modified very greatly by the use of Mr. Greenleaf's scheme for traffic. Except for a very limited duration of time daily, even this arrangement would not have to be enforced. As to the alleged 'irritation' caused by the presence of a traffic policeman at the head of the bridge, we believe such an officer will always be necessary whichever plan were selected, and especially at celebrations or occasions such as the welcoming of distinguished foreigners arriving at Washington by water.

Assuring you of our respect for the opinion of the Commission of Fine Arts and for that of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, we wish herewith, nevertheless, to protest against the decision and put on record our opinion that the proposed alteration of the steps injures seriously the whole project as a memorial monument - the bridge being a monument and not a commercial project.

While the above sets forth our feeling about the matter, we hasten to say that we shall undertake immediately the studies recommended by the Commission of Fine Arts, and by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and will leave no stone unturned to solve the problem along the lines requested in your letter.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) McKim, Mead and White."

In opening the discussion, Mr. Moore said: " The meeting has been called for what is expected a final consideration of the question of steps and underpass. The Commission has had the problem under consideration since July of last year and has reached a stage where it was thought very necessary to consider the problem with the former acrhitect and landscape architect members of the Commission, in the hope that the best solution possible will be obtained. Mr. Delano has put in shape his ideas of the subject, and I am going to ask him to speak first."

Mr. Delano said he had prepared a brief statement in writing, setting forth what he thought expressed his own views and of some of the members and former members of the Commission, and which he read, as follows:

"First of all, let me say that I believe McKim, Mead and White have every reason to feel aggrieved. If I were in their place I

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"First of all, let me say that I believe McKim, Mead and White have every reason to feel aggrieved. If I were in their place I

should be indignant that at this late date a question which long ago seemed settled should be opened again for discussion---apparently due to a lack of conviction on the part of the Fine Arts Commission. I feel too that in voicing the views here set forth I am running the risk of making McKim, Mead and White feel that I am playing an unfriendly and disloyal part, which I deplore, for there is no one who has a higher regard for their work and for the knowledge, accumulated over a long period of years, which they possess; so I hope rather against hope that the personal element may be eliminated and that in speaking as I do they will consider that I am giving voice not alone to my views but to those of a considerable number of members - past and present - of the Fine Arts Commission.

When I joined the Commission four years ago I took it for granted that the steps and water gate were a part of the bridge contract, and it was only a year ago that I realized that a modification of this important part of the bridge and plaza scheme was still possible.

The Washington Park and Planning Commission are responsible for opening the question. As they studied the traffic problem they realized that with the inauguration of the Arlington Bridge there would be great confusion of the lines of traffic on the Lincoln Memorial plaza, which would naturally take away from the tranquility which should surround such a monument. (There will be enough at best). This same Commission felt very strongly that a means should be provided for carrying the two streams of traffic at different levels, if possible. The fairness of this contention appealed to certain members of the Fine Arts Commission and since then means of accomplishing that purpose have been sought.

In order words, when the steps were planned the question of traffic congestion was not imminent, as it is now, and the steps seemed to many a very fine termination of the Mall (it did to me); but conditions and points of view have changed in the past five years and it would seem wise for the Fine Arts Commission, with whom responsibility rests, to reconsider the problem with an open mind so that in the future we may not be held accountable for an inadequate solution, beautiful as it may be.

Granting the necessity for an underpass, there are two ways of approaching this problem: First, admit that the steps as planned are the ideal solution from the aesthetic point of view and try to make the underpass fit into the scheme; or, second, forgetting all past solutions of the problem, try to find the most practicable and most beautiful way of accomplishing this. It is along this latter line that the minds of several members of the Park and Planning Commission and past and present members of the Fine Arts Commission have worked. They have recognized the necessity of providing for an underpass and have questioned whether, the steps with a tunnel, 400 feet long ill-lighted and ill-ventilated, is the ideal solution; and as they have thought about it and tried to solve the problem have come to question the steps themselves and the water gate as the ideal solution in any case, whether the underpass were required or not. The reasons advanced are as follows:

1st. That the Mall vista ends with the Lincoln Memorial in Mr. Bacon's scheme. One does not see through the Memorial, as sketched in outline by the Commission of 1901. From the Lincoln Memorial the Mall splits in two-one artery to the right goes to Rock Creek Park, the

should be indignant that at this late date a question which long ago seemed settled should be opened again for discussion---apparently due to a lack of conviction on the part of the Fine Arts Commission. I feel too that in voicing the views here set forth I am running the risk of making Mellin, Lloyd and White feel that I am playing an unfriendly and disloyal part, which I deplore, for there is no one who has a higher regard for their work and for the knowledge accumulated over a long period of years, which they possess; so I hope rather against hope that the personal element may be eliminated and that in speaking as I do they will consider that I am giving voice not alone to my views but to those of a considerable number of members - past and present - of the Fine Arts Commission.

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In order words, when the steps were planned the question of traffic congestion was not imminent, as it is now, and the steps seemed to many a very fine termination of the Mall (it did to me); but conditions and points of view have changed in the past five years and it would seem wise for the Fine Arts Commission, with such responsibility rests, to reconsider the problem with an open mind so that in the future we may not be held accountable for an inadequate solution, bewitched as it may be.

Granting the necessity for an underpass, there are two ways of approaching this problem: First, admit that the steps as planned are the ideal solution from the aesthetic point of view and try to make the underpass fit into the scheme; or, second, forgetting all past solutions of the problem, try to find the most practicable and most beautiful way of accomplishing this. It is along this latter line that the minds of several members of the Park and Planning Commission and past and present members of the Fine Arts Commission have worked. They have recognized the necessity of providing for an underpass and have greeted whatever the steps with a turn at 400 feet long ill-lighted and ill-ventilated, is the ideal solution; and as they have thought about it and tried to solve the problem have come to question the steps themselves and the water gate as the ideal solution in any case, whether the underpass were required or not. The reasons advanced are as follows:

1st. That the Mall vista ends with the Lincoln Memorial in Mr. Bacon's scheme. One does not see through the Memorial, as sketched in outline by the Commission of 1901. From the Lincoln Memorial the Mall splits in two-one artery to the right goes to Rock Creek Park, the

other to the left crosses the Arlington Bridge; to add a third element in the form of steps leading to the river adds confusion to the composition, for as one stands on the Plaza or on the peristyle of the Memorial one will see before him the road to Rock Creek, the steps leading to the Potomac River, and the Bridge, headed towards the Lee Mansion, and he will ask 'What is the real intention?' Either the Bridge or the steps should be the dominant motive. Which is it?

2nd. Some of us feel that a wide flight of steps does not make a strong abutment for such an important bridge and that a retaining wall, with a road at the water's edge, would give a more constructible, less costly, more practical and quite as imposing a solution of the problem and at the same time do away with the confusion of intention on the plaza side.

3d. Whether, considering the very questionable amount of use that these steps will be put to, and the very considerable outlay necessitated, the Commission is justified in advocating a scheme which, I think, everyone will admit, can only be seen to full advantage from the Virginia shore, at which distance it will make little difference whether the strong base on which the Lincoln Memorial stands is formed by a flight of steps or a retaining wall.

4th. That this is not the ideal place for a water gate to Washington. A great many people think that it should be at Haines Point, and that to force a water gate and steps at this plaza is wrong in principle. If this water gate is planned only to receive distinguished visitors, it will be used very rarely and when used lead to the back of the Lincoln Memorial where there are no steps to carry one to the monument; if it is to lead to a basin where canoes and row boats lie, this basin could better be placed on the other side of the river on Columbia Island, where the channel between the Island and the mainland would give a far more adequate landing place for small boats.

These in brief are the arguments which several members feel should be presented before a final decision is reached to put a tunnel four hundred feet long, badly lighted and ventilated, under the abutments and steps of the Bridge and plaza. If, after deliberation and putting aside all questions of loyalty to a scheme which five years ago seemed the best but which today does not fully answer the requirements, the majority of the Commission still feel convinced of the overwhelming effectiveness of these steps, I for one will whole-heartedly joint the majority.

March 15, 1928.

Mr. Moore thereupon called on Mr. Olmsted for his views.

Mr. Olmsted said: "As a member of the Park and Planning Commission, I want to say in regard to the traffic problem (which Mr. Delano has stated, that really upset the minds of everybody and started them mulling around and

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Mr. Olmsted said: "As a member of the Park and Planning Commission, I want to say in regard to the Park problem(which Mr. Peixotto has stated, that

really upset the minds of everybody and started them mulling around and

discussing various possibilities), I believe with other members of that Commission, that the traffic problem at the bridge head is a serious one and that it ought to be simplified by means of an underpass if a decent and satisfactory solution by an underpass can be arrived at. I should not say quite as strongly as Mr. Delano put it, that an underpass is a necessity, because the monumental character of this situation is so important that if an aesthetically good solution cannot be found I would rather put up with the traffic difficulties, the delays and confusion and the many serious objections to that traffic complication, than adopt a treatment which was distinctly undignified and unsatisfactory on aesthetic grounds. Personally it seems to me that the tunnel solution is an unsatisfactory solution aesthetically,--that it would seem unreasonable and forced and disagreeable. If it were the only solution for separating the traffic I would say we had better forget it and put up with the traffic difficulties on the plaza. That is one point. That is my personal view in regard to the matter.

Aside from the points which have been very well covered in Mr. Delano's statement, I want to add one other point which has not been mentioned and which has given me a great deal of concern, since I realized how things were shaping up. At the time the Lincoln Memorial was designed and the grades were determined at the Memorial, the bridge was still undesigned; it was a scheme in plan, well fixed, but its elevation was unstudied, its profile was unstudied. It was only a short time ago, not having had any direct contact with the preparation of the plans for the Bridge, that I came to realize that the elevation of the roadway at the end of the bridge was to be much higher than it was assumed the bridge would be when the Lincoln Memorial was designed and when the circle and the plaza around it were

determined by Mr. Bacon. I am told that the elevation to which the bridge is being constructed was fixed by unavoidable factors not taken into account when the lower bridge level was assumed by Mr. Bacon; and I take it that it is fixed and cannot be changed. But it has a most unfortunate relation to the grades around the Memorial adopted by Mr. Bacon in relation to an assumed lower bridge. Now, as I say, I came to realize this only quite recently. The roadway at the end of the bridge, and the riverside edge of the Plaza which connects with the bridge roadway, is to be several feet higher than the roadway that now surrounds the Lincoln Memorial. The ground slopes down from the Lincoln Memorial to the circular roadway and then would slope up to the entrance to the bridge and the top of the proposed water-gate steps. These things don't show up on little scale models or on plan. But when it comes to be executed I think it would be terrible to descend from the Lincoln Memorial to the plaza and then have the plaza slope up to the steps at the river. I think some other solution must be found. I do not know what the answer is, but some better answer than this must be found. In connection with this point, as well as in connection with the point that Mr. Delano brought up, I want to reinforce what he has said about the character of the treatment of the Lincoln Memorial in relation to the main axis.

The original Lincoln Memorial scheme on which I worked with Mr. Mellin in 1901 was, as has been said, a two-faced project, facing towards the river and towards the Capitol. There were three or four different studies made in a very preliminary way, but that impression was in them all. The design finally adopted for the Lincoln Memorial was quite different, very definitely facing towards the Capitol with no entrance upon the west side, and much more distinctly a terminus of the axial scheme. The elevation of the Memorial is fixed and

the elevation of the east side of the Circle is fixed (indicating on the model), but in view of the fact that the Memorial is not symmetrical about the north-south axis, but is treated as a termination of the east-west axis, I think the circular road around it might be tilted slightly from west to east, so as to raise the west side of the Circle and avoid leaving the plaza pitching upward from the circular platform of the Memorial toward the river. Thus, instead of going up towards the river and the pylons you would have essentially a level plaza, which I think is vital to a satisfactory solution. This thing plainly relates to the river front treatment, whether by the very wide steps or some other scheme, and I bring it up because it is one of the vital elements. I think a solution must be found which will give an impression of a level plaza and not one sloping up towards the river, and I doubt if this can be successfully done unless some space is left between the bridge and the central level portion of the west edge of the plaza, in which space some of the difference in elevation between the bridge roadway and the present road elevation around the Memorial can be taken up."

Mr. White thereupon said that the drawings, which are now in Colonel Grant's office and which have been there for possibly two months, show that very change. The plans are now in Washington.

Continuing, Mr. Olmsted said, "I have said I think nearly all I care to say at the present moment. My main point is this, serious as I consider the traffic difficulties may be, I cannot believe it right to adopt the tunnel solution or underpass running under the steps. A wall with a road below, or any other solution would be better than a tunnel, which would in fact be a bad solution aesthetically, undignified and unsatisfactory. I hope still a good solution can be found.

Mr. Morris asked Mr. Olmsted, "When you speak of an unsatisfactory solution from an aesthetic point of view with respect to the tunnel, do you mean

mean unsatisfactory aesthetically with respect to the road passing through the tunnel, or with respect to the view of this treatment from the outside?"

Mr. Olmsted replied, "Primarily in passing through the tunnel. I am sure the purpose of such a tunnel or such by-pass is to carry a stream of travel through it,-people who are out for a park drive to enjoy the whole situation; and to take them through such a tunnel I am sure would be most unsatisfactory, and undignified; and it would seem forced and unreasonable. I believe it would be better, I would say it would be the lesser of two evils, to hold up the traffic at some inconvenience, rather than put it through a tunnel, which would not only be disagreeable but would seem obviously forced, and far more costly in money and disagreeableness than would seem justified by the degree of inconvenience it would avoid. It might be chosen in handling business traffic at 42d Street and Fifth Avenue for the sake of saving time; but for this kind of problem I cannot see it. If there is a reasonably good solution by which traffic conflict on the plaza can be avoided I think it should be adopted. I don't think the tunnel is such a solution. And unless one is found I would prefer to accept the grade crossing of traffic on the plaza and regulate it as well as possible by police control.

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Olmsted, I don't quite understand the solution you are advocating?

Mr. Olmsted: I am not advocating a solution. I am simply saying if no better solution than the tunnel can be found for the grade separation of the bridge traffic and park traffic I would rather put up with the inconvenience of their crossing at grade on the plaza, with a certain amount of confusion and delay in handling traffic. But I am looking for light as to other possibilities; of treating the water front which would permit a grade separation not open to the objections I have to the tunnel; a solution that some of you may have been considering while I have been away.

Mr. Moore: Mr. Olmsted has raised the point about the grades in the

present plaza back of the Lincoln Memorial. I have thought it at various times a serious thing and have asked for a restudy again and again so as to be sure we are not making a mistake here. Now if Mr. White, representing McKim, Mead and White, can clear up this point, I should like to have him do so.

Mr. White. These drawings were sent to Colonel Grant and furnish some solution to overcome the difficulty. The exact date they were sent I do not know. Mr. Adams thinks possibly two months ago. Mr. Vegezzi made the drawings a long time ago and they were sent some months ago. If we have a copy here we can show this in the drawings, it is a very delicate adjustment.

Mr. Adams produced a print of the latest drawing (revised February 9, 1928) which they thought Mr. Olmsted had not seen, and which indicated there was a difference in grade of only about two feet in the elevations of each side of the plaza.

Thereupon Mr. Moore said, "Then for the purposes of this discussion, we may say that this point has been met."

Mr. Gilbert: Now we are trying to decide in principle whether the axis of the great composition stops at the Lincoln Memorial, where it splits and is carried up the Rock Creek Parkway on one side and across the bridge on the other. Now it is to that principle I take it we want to address ourselves.

Mr. Olmsted: Mr. Moore, I should have added a few words more. It is on that point just mentioned. I do feel that the change made from the original proposal of the two-faced Lincoln Memorial and the existing design affects the whole situation quite radically, not only in making possibly reasonable such an adjustment of grade as is now proposed, but also it affects the various possible kinds of treatment of the space opposite the Lincoln Memorial on the axis. There is much less reason for emphasizing the function of that

present plans based on the Lincoln Memorial. I have thought it at various times a terrible thing and have asked for a recount again and again so as to be sure we are not making a mistake here. Now if Mr. White, representing Mellon, Lloyd and White, can clear up this point, I should like to have him do so.

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axis to the river by broad steps than there was in the first place.

One more point, there might be a pretty strong argument for putting a retaining wall there. Personally I do not find myself in sympathy with the theory that that is a good place for the main Watergate of Washington and I do not believe it will be largely used if it is there provided, for the reasons that Mr. Delano has stated. If in the study of the Lincoln Memorial and the approach for purely pictorial purposes, we will say, the steps were desirable there might be enough excuse for possible landing there, but it seems to me it is not the place that would be selected as a functional Watergate for Washington.

Mr. Moore thereupon asked Mr. Gilbert if he would express his views on the subject, saying "Mr. Gilbert, you were one of the original members of the Commission of Fine Arts, but also your studies of the Mall System before the Plan of 1901 were along the general lines of the Plan of 1901. What is your idea of the importance of going down to the river and carrying the composition down to the river under the circumstances?"

Mr. Gilbert said: "Mr. Moore, I feel I have been out of this matter so long that I am really at a loss to answer your question very effectively. I would rather hear the views of those who have been closely in the study of it. I might, however, preface what I have to say by saying I have never felt that the Lincoln Memorial, beautiful as it is in design, a masterpiece of architecture and admirably located, is an entirely satisfactory solution of the problem. I always preferred the peristyle design prepared by the Park Commission. The Memorial as now erected is a closed cella. The Park Commission's design was an open peristyle with steps on each side. And I think you know from discussions in the Commission of Fine Arts 12 or 15 years ago, when I was on it, that I proposed some axial adjustments; it has been my view that the bridge should have extended straight through on the axis of the Mall to Analostan Island, and that there the axis should be deflected toward the hill. I found no others who held this opinion relative to the Bridge location, and it was not in harmony with the original scheme. Now I feel that I have not studied the problem ~~xxx~~ of the space between the Memorial and the River shore enough to contribute much to the discussion in the matter of detail. I was not apprised of the need of changing the grade of the roadway to meet the grade of the Bridge until Mr. Olmsted mentioned it. I would certainly share the views Mr. Olmsted has expressed in regard to the change in the plaza and change in the grade, and that the bridge should debouch on the plaza by an agreeable and very easy grade of several feet if necessary. But that I think can be adjusted without much difficulty. I think the change of grade of the roadway encircling the memorial can be effected without disturbing the landscape.

As to the tunnel, I didn't realize there was any discussion about it until quite recently. I think the "Watergate" steps with a tunnel under

the steps does not seem to me very objectionable. People who would take the tunnel route would take it in preference to the surface route leading to the Plaza past the Lincoln Memorial to the Bridge to avoid the traffic at the Bridge head to reach their destination more quickly and without the interruption of traffic rules. I think a tunnel of the length required under the steps would not have the physical difficulties mentioned by Mr. Delano; 400 feet is not a great distance. It is not necessary that it should be "dark and ill-ventilated". I think the lighting would not be necessarily bad, and if necessary would be increased by electric lighting,--that is a detail, however, which is of much less importance than the general composition or the general aesthetic idea of the whole composition. I would consider the plan from the standpoint of the picture, the impression it would create on my mind. It seems to me the view from the Lincoln Memorial to the river would be more charming if not interrupted by a balustrade or parapet wall. I think that the view from the river to the Lincoln Memorial, for those using the river for boating purposes, would be more agreeable without that intervening wall or parapet. I doubt, while perhaps it is not exactly a parallel case, I doubt if any of us would be willing to see a parapet wall or balustrade placed across the vista of the Washington Monument, between the Washington Monument and the Gardens. I can imagine a scheme whereby a series of steps going from a terrace down to the Washington Monument Gardens can be made interesting, but I think the Park Commission's solution in its time to give the Monument the sense of a base being on a stylobate with broad steps leading down to the Gardens is much to be preferred. I believe a similar theory should be applied here. I think McKim would not have advised closing the axis. I say this in view of his advice to me in a somewhat similar case. And I think, looking at this project

from the standpoint of the "picture", that the wall or parapet should not be built. My own feeling is if the tunnel is objectionable from the picture standpoint, assuming this is a suitable place for the Watergate, it might be best to bring the road across at the foot of the steps near the river. But I would not feel satisfied with a balustrade or parapet wall. I think it would give the composition less distinction, less impression of charm and suavity, and would be less agreeable in the landscape. These are my personal impressions only without having studied the design in detail. I may have more to say later when some of you gentlemen have spoken."

Mr. Moore then called on Mr. Pope and asked him what he had to say about this problem.

Mr. Pope said: "Well I feel I am not qualified to say much, excepting I have had a vital interest in the situation ever since I was on the Commission. When I received Mr. Delano's letter, the first impression I had was one of surprise. I was disturbed that the road would go along the shore but on reaching the bridge some would see it and others would find themselves in a tunnel. If I were on the shore road I would like to have a little bit to enjoy. It has a point of interest. Mr. Delano presented a solution for it. The solution satisfies me as far as the practical aspect of the road is concerned. But to note what Mr. Gilbert has said about the pictorial impression, my own feeling as to what I would associate with the spirit of the scheme is not a wall. Personally I would rather have a grass slope going down the sides of the steps to the water,- anything that would not block up and make uninteresting the aspect from this side of the Memorial.

Now there is one point that has been brought up that the Mall composition ends at the Lincoln Memorial. I think it does and I think we can leave out

everything on the Mall and just consider the treatment of this end of it. But because the Mall composition ends there does not necessarily justify a wall at this end. To me a wall is objectionable because it is a crude ending. There is a two sided approach here to the Lincoln Memorial, even though it is at the end of the Mall. There is nothing to call for taking away the approach on the west side of the Memorial and to eliminate all that just because the Mall is beyond it. I feel the view from the river as inviting as it can be. While I do not say the wall is not possible, I would like to see in this composition, shown in the model, more association between the upper and the lower level. The most direct way to do it is by a flight of steps. In some of the drawings there is a little ramp and there are smaller steps in the center. Personally I would like to see this side of the Lincoln Memorial more interestingly treated than by having a parapet ending. Now that is all well enough if it is possible. I agree with Mr. Olmsted that it would be better to have some complication of traffic on the plaza rather than submerge it, better to carry out the scheme shown in the 1901 Plan. The present solution offered is not satisfactory to me. I think this side of the Memorial can be and should be made more interesting. I would keep the flight of steps. They may not be used very often, but it would be better to have them than a wall. People would criticize us for putting in a tunnel, but also if we would ignore the vista on the west side of the Lincoln Memorial and a possible approach to it from the river. There is a relationship between the upper level and the river."

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Moore, following what Mr. Olmsted has described, we are now in the age of the automobile and rapid land traffic. A few years ago we were in the age of the horse-drawn vehicle and in the interim in the

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Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Moore, following what Mr. Olmsted has described, we are now in the age of the automobile and rapid land traffic. A few years ago we were in the age of the horse-drawn vehicle and in the interim in the

bicycle period of travel, a few years hence it may be that the airplane will largely take the place of the automobile, so that in time the automobile problem will be less troublesome. I only say that, because in my opinion the aesthetic question far outweighs the question of traffic."

Mr. Moore then called upon Mr. Medary for his views of the problem.

Mr. Medary said: "I want to endorse everything Mr. Delano has said concerning the criticism of this or any plan. All of us here realize that the solution of this problem must meet the criticism of the next twenty-five, fifty or one hundred years, and that that judgment will be concerned with the treatment of the problem and not with the personal opinion of any of us here. As a member of the Park and Planning Commission, I found this particular problem intimately tied up with the development on the Virginia Shore. The various plans had indicated the east-and-west axis of the Mall recalled in some manner on the Virginia side of the Potomac and leading to many difficulties in plan. Detailed study led to the conclusion that the east-and-west axis stopped in the center of the Lincoln Memorial and there split into two axes, one of which crossed the Arlington Bridge on a line terminating in the Arlington Mansion, the other establishing the beginning of the Rock Creek Parkway. The treatment of the Lincoln Memorial by Mr. Bacon seemed to indicate clearly that he must have held this view. The Planning Commission, in common with all those of us who have had to do with the planning of Washington, has held the Plan of 1901 as the basis for all future study, and has had no thought of proposing any changes in it until such changes seemed to be the logical result of further study of the original elements of the Plan. It was in this spirit that I was convinced that the east-and-west axis of the Mall could not be re-established again on the Virginia side of the Potomac, and that the apparent projection of

it through the Lincoln Memorial, terminating in a flight of steps dropping into the river, was a violation of the simplest interpretation of a divided axis, with the interest after leaving the Lincoln Memorial concentrated on the two points marked by the pylons at the bridge head and at the entrance to the Rock Creek Driveway. The steps seemed to be out of place as they introduce a third element on an axis leading up to the blank wall of the Lincoln Memorial from a point in the river where there is no logical approach. The steps could be seen with the Memorial only from the Virginia side of the river and from that distance it would be difficult to distinguish them from any other mass of masonry. A simple, direct, and beautiful treatment is the primary necessity and I believe a masonry wall connecting the masonry of the bridge with the masonry of the Rock Creek Drive retaining wall, with the traffic arches in the bridge treated in a direct and obvious fashion, would be much finer than a tunnel concealed under a great flight of steps, which, no matter how beautifully designed, must be regarded to a certain extent as stage scenery. We realize that, whether wall or steps, the work is in the hands of master designers and that if we choose an obvious and direct principle it can be developed in a beautiful and worthy manner. From the river and from the Virginia shore the scale of the Lincoln Memorial would in my opinion be much better preserved if the great flight of steps extending from the bridge to driveway could be abandoned in favor of some treatment more in scale with the memorial.

Mr. Pope: This question of having the rear of the Lincoln Memorial treated with steps, from the standpoint of logic I would say that with the approaches to the bridge and the pylons this is not the rear of the Memorial and that the break in the axis requires special treatment. You are entering into the back of it. There is an element of making this a front view because of the approach to the bridge and the Rock Creek Parkway connection. This side of the Memorial must be interesting. It may not be a function of the axis, but the axis should stop gently.

Mr. Bedary: Don't you think, Mr. Pope, it is possible to treat the thing

beautiful with a wall? Grant the steps are not necessary, do you think then it is justifiable to put them there?

Mr. Pope: I have not touched on the question of the steps. It is simply a question of function of the central motive. As you see it in the model, there is the Parkway entrance and the Bridge entrance meeting at the plaza. The place should be interesting and I feel it should slope down into the lower terrace.

Mr. Medary: I would make it beautiful, but I do not think the steps are a reasonable enough interpretation. The wall seems reasonable, the logical thing to connect the Parkway and the Bridge. If you have the steps I think the pylons have been misplaced.

Mr. Pope: It is like a persons face. Looking at him from the rear you know he has eyes but cannot tell if the nose is too prominent.

Mr. Olmsted: I would say there is no central motive on this side. Is it not a question of scale? Do not the steps overpower the Memorial in dignity and interest?

Mr. Pope: If the scale of the steps is too big, so as to dominate the bridge or the Memorial, then there is something wrong.

Mr. Olmsted: This occurs to me. Mr. Gilbert touched upon it. Following up what I have said about the most unfortunate effect of having the plaza slope upward toward the river, at best it will be difficult to get a sense of the plaza's sloping downward toward the river as one would like to have it. The elevation of the Lincoln Memorial and the bridge being fixed the best that can be done will be to avoid a sense of the plaza's rising toward the river. It is certainly a question whether or not a continuous parapet, which adds another three feet to the elevation at the West edge of the plaza would not make the problem more difficult. The question suggests whether

in this scheme some device for reducing the width and massiveness of the original steps, without hemming the plaza in upon the west side by a hard and fast parapet wall, may not be advisable.

Mr. Medary: I feel that a simple direct treatment of the problem is basic. I think a tunnel under the steps is a compromise that will lead to permanent criticism and can never have the dignity belonging to an obvious straightforward treatment.

Thereupon a number of views and plans were considered showing suggestions made for treating the west side of the Lincoln Memorial. Mr. Gilbert pointed out that the pylon at a bridge head was a survival of the old Suspension Bridge idea where towers were a necessary part of the construction; that they were unfortunately placed in connection with the Alexander III Bridge in Paris and have a tendency to be overdone. He did not regard them necessary for the Arlington Memorial Bridge. Mr. Gilbert said: "Eliminate the pylons and there will be less to discuss on this question. To introduce the element of the diagonal axis and enforce it, looking across here (from the model), I am very much struck with the height of the pylons in proportion to the height of the composition. If you would eliminate the pylons it would simplify this problem."

Mr. Moore thereupon called upon Mr. Ayres for his statement.

Mr. Ayres said: "Mr. Moore, I am afraid I am not very good at an argument anyway and today am so hoarse I can hardly speak. I originally felt the great steps as a water-gate were a fine thing in this location but have gradually been converted. The more I have considered the matter at various times the more I have become convinced that there was no good reason for trying to continue the main axis of the Mall beyond the Lincoln where it has already been thoroughly stopped - as, except from an airplane,

it cannot be apparent from the river side of the Lincoln Memorial.

There will be only two possible views I take it of this development: one from the bridge (or the very distant similar one from the other side of the river) and the other from the rear of the Lincoln Memorial or various points on its circular surrounding drive.

From the bridge, particularly as its roadway is cambered and will appear sloping down to the shore, it will appear I fear very loosely connected unless it ties into it more obviously than it does in the scheme presented. The great steps separated from the bridge head by planting and then just planting on the other side appear to me from this view to leave the bridge by itself and not connected and knit into a single scheme of surroundings of the Lincoln Memorial. The model shows this to me conclusively. The other view in the same way seems to fail to connect and make one thing of the circle with its two radiating roadways (one the bridge) which are marked strongly and symmetrically by the double pylons, if such a great gap as the steps make is left between them.

I also have the feeling that such a tremendous width of steps which only really start from a narrow sidewalk which is part of the circumference of a circle and has no axial approach leading to them, or from them, to the memorial will look a bit foolish. My opinion would be that perhaps the steps also tend to dwarf the Lincoln Memorial in scale and fail to knit together all the parts and make a strong termination to the bridge as perhaps a great wall might."

Mr. Moore then called on Mr. Morris to express his views of the problem.

Mr. Morris said: "I have listened to the discussions and arguments at the various meetings of the Commission with an open and indeterminate mind. It was with great difficulty that I approached the problem. I had always

assumed that the solution of the westerly end of the Mall and the westerly side of the Memorial had been determined and settled. The question was brought up comparatively recently by the introduction of the question of the automobile circulation at the Memorial. I realize with Mr. Delano the great importance of that problem. I was temporarily in sympathy with the solution of the problem offered, which differed from the original design. While I think an unimpeded crossing is a very essential feature, I do not think I am prepared to go to the extent of saying that it should be discarded and eliminated for aesthetic considerations entirely. One should be compatible with the other. I think there is always a solution of a problem if we can arrange to find it, to develop the solution. I have this morning as a result of the remarks that have been made become more firmly convinced of the tremendous merit of the basic elements of the solution offered by the architects. I think that too much stress has been laid by some on the point that this is primarily the axis of the Mall; this point of view has been met here, but the real treatment of the west side of the Lincoln Memorial should be considered as most important. I agree with Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Pope most heartily. There should be a feeling of beauty, of openness, and generosity here, whether or not the place is ever much used as a Watergate. I think the open graciousness of a wide, generous, unbroken flight of steps down to the river, provides exercise to the imagination, an imagination it would be most unfortunate to miss through a less interesting solution. Perhaps due to the very

nature of the problem the scale of the bridge is essentially different from the Memorial itself. This is very obviously so, in looking at the model. I think any device that is inconsistent with the treatment of the whole scheme is wrong. There must be a treatment as a whole which will provide a gradual change, in equalization of relationship between the two structures. I cannot see any opportunity of such change in scale by the suggested treatment of a retaining wall. I t seems to me that the termination of the whole composition, the importance of the weight of the whole composition of the Mall, not only as seen on a paper plan, but as will be seen from the Arlington Heights, as will be seen from the bridge, from the Rock Creek Parkway down, and will be increasingly seen by persons traveling over the site in the sky, that the big scale of the approach corresponding with the big scale of the bridge on this side, demands "the nose between the eyes" that Mr. Pope referred to. I think the solution, in an imperfected way, has been suggested by the architects, which is entirely consistent with the demand of traffic along the river front. It has been pointed out that people who use the Underpass will use it to a great extent involuntarily and it is only a matter of seconds to go through it. Mr. Kendall has shortened the proposed tunnel to the width of the

flight of the steps, thereby increasing the open wells on either side. Certainly with modern systems of air ventilation and the few seconds to go through the tunnel, it is certainly an indication of what can be developed to establish the composition from the point of view of the Water-gate. It seems to me a very appropriate place for a Water-gate to the city; the moment a distinguished visitor arrives in Washington, it is but fitting that he should be in the presence of Lincoln and his Memorial, of the great representative of the American people, - the moment he sets his foot on shore. I would regard it an anti-climax to put the Water-gate at Hains Point, which would leave the visitor a considerable distance from the Lincoln Memorial.

I am heartily in accord with Mr. Gilbert's suggestion. I feel very strongly there is a question as to the size of the pylons. If the model is correct there seems to be an adjustment necessary of the pylons in relation to the bridge and plaza, that they should be reduced in mass. I think also that what Mr. Pope suggests, a slope down to the river, is desirable. I was glad to see the illustration of the two schemes shown on the models. I am in favor of what has been suggested, - the strong abutment, the strong receptions of the bridge at the shore line, the openness of the steps with tunnel beneath. I am strongly in favor of retaining the steps and of

interfering as little as possible with the 1901 Plan."

Mr. Moore then called upon Mr. Garfield for his views.

Mr. Garfield said: "Mr. Moore, I thought I had come down as a minority of one. I didn't wish to be obstinate about it, but since some have spoken in favor of retaining the 1901 scheme I am strong for retaining it. I admit that the axis stops at the Lincoln Memorial, but I am glad to see there is something going on at the west side of the Memorial that ought not to be overlooked. The view I have taken is this, the distinctly pictorial one. I think the thing itself at this point should be as simple as possible. Yet without the steps this whole plaza with wall or parapet is a mere traffic place. Those who come up the river should have reason to expect that there would be a place where they could land, and I regard it a most appropriate point for such a landing place. They need not necessarily be a great flight of steps. We would not have them simply because they are beautiful, for they will serve a purpose. The fact that it will be impossible to see them from the Virginia shore, as has been said, is unimportant. Washington is in a warm climate and the people will come down to the steps in the summer time. There are many at the Lincoln Memorial now each day and the number will increase when the Mall is finished. Surely it will be a fine thing if they can go to the end of the Mall and find steps there to the river. There is no place now in all the shore line of Washington that provides for a Water-gate, and there is no place where it fits into the scheme so well as at the Lincoln Memorial. As to the traffic problem, I have been philistine about it. I don't care. I don't believe that the quietness xxx of the Plaza above is going to be helped very much by the tunnel and a 30 foot roadway through it.

interfering as little as possible with the 1901 Plan."

Mr. More then called upon Mr. Caufield for his views.

Mr. Caufield said: "Mr. More, I thought I had come down as a minority of one. I didn't wish to be obstinate about it, but since some have spoken in favor of retaining the 1901 scheme I am strong for retaining it. I admit that the axis stops at the Lincoln Memorial, but I am glad to see there is something going on at the west side of the Memorial that ought not to be overlooked. The view I have taken in this, the distinctly pictorial one. I think the thing itself at this point should be as simple as possible. Yet without the steps this whole plans with wall or parapet is a most tragic place. Those who come up the river should have reason to expect that there would be a place where they could land, and I regard it a most appropriate point for such a landing place. They need not necessarily be a great flight of steps. We would not have them simply because they are beautiful, for they will serve a purpose. The fact that it will be impossible to see them from the Virginia shore, as has been said, is unimportant. Washington is in a warm climate and the people will come down to the steps in the summer time. There are many at the Lincoln Memorial now each day and the number will increase when the wall is finished. Surely it will be a fine thing if they can go to the end of the Mall and find steps there to the river. There is no place now in all the shore line of Washington that provides for a Water-Gate, and there is no place where it fits into the scheme so well as at the Lincoln Memorial. As to the traffic problem, I have been thinking about it. I don't care. I don't believe that the vehemence men of the Plaza have going to be helped very much by the tunnel and a 60 foot roadway through it.

because the chance is no policeman will be able to say as vehicles approach the Memorial whether they want to cross the bridge or go to East Potomac Park, and he certainly can't send them into the tunnel if they don't want to go that way. Many will want to pass the Memorial in spite of supposed traffic difficulties. I am glad there are others here who say we should not spoil the 1901 Scheme. I hope you will keep the steps."

Mr. Moore then called on Mr. Vitale for his statement.

Mr. Vitale said: "I have been a member of the Commission for a shorter time than the other members, so that whatever I say must be exceedingly modest. At the meetings I have so far attended much emphasis has been placed on the question of traffic. As to the matter of design I have not given that much thought, as I believed it had already been settled. I am perfectly willingly that the opinion of all you gentlemen, who have had greater experience, and have greater ability, should decide ultimately the question of having these steps, and certainly I think great regard should be had for the recommendations of the architects of the Bridge, who are master designers. In the final solution of the matter I should say we should lay stress on the composition itself and its scale rather than on the automobile. In regard to the traffic, I wish to relate what Mr. Greenleaf told me in Florence a few weeks ago. As you know he is very much in favor of the flight of steps and very much in favor of making use of the upper plaza by establishing a circular movement and separating north and south bound traffic from east and west by diverting traffic by way of the Ericsson Memorial and thence around the Great Circle of the Memorial. Mr. Greenleaf still believes this is the best solution of the problem. If traffic is diverted through a tunnel under the steps or across a roadway in the middle of the steps or at the base of the proposed retaining wall,

it is very immaterial I think in its relation to the pleasure people will have in going past the Lincoln Memorial, because they will see nothing of it in any case. As far as going through the tunnel is concerned, if due regard must be given to the traffic problem, that is the solution which I personally favor. As a matter of fact Mr. Kendall and I had a discussion of the problem recently and I made the suggestion of the tunnel under the steps, that it would be an entirely feasible matter from a physical standpoint. People who go through the tunnel will not see the Memorial, but if they want to see the Memorial they can take the upper level way along the plaza. I would hate to see a road in the middle of the steps, because it would not solve the traffic problem; and it would destroy the simplicity and beauty and dignity of the steps to have a continuous flow of traffic in the middle of the steps; it would destroy the object for which the steps have been designed. Therefore in my mind I should completely disregard in the discussion the question of traffic for the present and consider only the question of intrinsic merit of the scheme from the point of view of design. I am convinced the axis of the Mall ends at the Memorial, and it splits at the Bridge and the Rock Creek Parkway, and I am not sure that the composition is of such gigantic scale in relation to the scale of the Lincoln Memorial that a restudy of this whole area may be very desirable. But I do feel that the problem is in the hands of a master designer and that if these points are brought up to him he will find the ultimate solution that will be satisfactory. It seems to me, since the opinions are so divergent, that I should like to give him the benfit of the doubt and leave to him the final decision."

Having heard from all the members and former members present, Mr. Moore

said: "Now how far have we got as a result of the discussion? What can we eliminate as undesirable features and what can we settle on as desirable?"

Mr. Garfield:"Mr. Moore, may I bring up one more point? Perhaps this should not be brought up in the discussion, but it has been suggested in relation to the pylons. We have to decide soon in relation to the statuary and as I have been sitting here I have been considering that something must be done to help that situation. The other question, whether we should have any figures on the bridge. If we have some there, are we not complicating the view from the bridge to the Memorial?"

Mr. Moore: I think Mr. Olmsted will conect me,-In the discussion of 1901, where I was a listener, it was thought that the bridge should be quite subordinate,--the subordination of the bridge should be insisted upon, and for that reason the location of the bridge was changed from New York Avenue to the Lincoln Memorial, and it was decided that the vehicles should go from the Memorial to the Cemetery. It is thus to be a park bridge and not a traffic bridge.

Mr. Olmsted: I have been thinking of the enormous scale of the plaza, it is a question in my mind whether the huge area is in scale with the Lincoln Memorial. So that whatever design is agreed on, for the river edge it would seem to me desirable to narrow the plaza somewhat, get back a little nearer to the Memorial, with a little less vastness in the scale of the plaza. I certainly agree that the shape of the thing as a whole is far more important than the traffic problem, much better to put up with some inconvenience of traffic than to get a general form that is not happy.

Mr. Moore: I wonder if we have gotten to the point where we can say we believe the composition should flow through to the river?

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Mr. Moore: I wonder if we have gotten to the point where we can say that the approach to the Memorial should be a park and not a traffic bridge.

Mr. Olmsted: I have been thinking of the enormous scale of the plans; it is a question in my mind whether the huge area is in scale with the Lincoln Memorial. So that whatever design is agreed on, it would seem to me desirable to narrow the plans somewhat, get back a little nearer to the Memorial, with a little less vastness in the scale of the plans. I certainly agree that the scale of the thing as a whole is far more important than the traffic problem, much better to put up with some inconvenience of traffic than to get a general form that is not lasting.

Mr. Garfield:"Mr. Moore, may I bring up one more point? Perhaps this should not be brought up in the discussion, but it has been suggested in relation to the bylaws. We have to decide soon in relation to the statuary and as I have been sitting here I have been considering that something must be done to help that situation. The other question, whether we should have any figures on the bridge. If we have some there, are we not complicating the view from the bridge to the Memorial?"

Mr. Moore: I think Mr. Olmsted will correct me,--In the discussion of 1902, where I was a listener, it was thought that the bridge should be quite subordinate,--the subordination of the bridge should be insisted upon, and for that reason the location of the bridge was changed from New York Avenue to the Lincoln Memorial, and it was decided that the vehicles should go from the Memorial to the Cemetery. It is time to be a park bridge and not a traffic bridge.

Mr. Olmsted: I have been thinking of the enormous scale of the plans; it is a question in my mind whether the huge area is in scale with the Lincoln Memorial. So that whatever design is agreed on, it would seem to me desirable to narrow the plans somewhat, get back a little nearer to the Memorial, with a little less vastness in the scale of the plans. I certainly agree that the scale of the thing as a whole is far more important than the traffic problem, much better to put up with some inconvenience of traffic than to get a general form that is not lasting.

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Mr. Moore: I think Mr. Olmsted will correct me,--In the discussion of 1902, where I was a listener, it was thought that the bridge should be quite subordinate,--the subordination of the bridge should be insisted upon, and for that reason the location of the bridge was changed from New York Avenue to the Lincoln Memorial, and it was decided that the vehicles should go from the Memorial to the Cemetery. It is time to be a park bridge and not a traffic bridge.

Mr. Olmsted: I have been thinking of the enormous scale of the plans; it is a question in my mind whether the huge area is in scale with the Lincoln Memorial. So that whatever design is agreed on, it would seem to me desirable to narrow the plans somewhat, get back a little nearer to the Memorial, with a little less vastness in the scale of the plans. I certainly agree that the scale of the thing as a whole is far more important than the traffic problem, much better to put up with some inconvenience of traffic than to get a general form that is not lasting.

Mr. Moore: I wonder if we have gotten to the point where we can say

to believe the composition should flow through to the river?

Mr. Delano: Then take up the question of the size of the flow.

The plan drawn by McKim, Mead and White was then inspected. Mr. White said the post office steps in New York City are 260 feet wide; the original design of the steps provided for 265 feet width; now these have been reduced to 225 feet. An open space is provided at each end of the steps as at Park Ave.

Mr. Vitale: I would rather see the tunnel right straight through, to which Mr. Delano agreed, omitting the green shown in the model on each side of the steps; or else have a sloping retaining wall on each side of the steps.

After further consideration Mr. Morris and Mr. Delano suggested the possibility of ending the steps so as to allow for a roadway at the foot of the steps and bringing them back, possibly 20 feet into the plaza.

Thereupon Mr. Partridge submitted a study made by Mr. Bacon showing his idea of the treatment of the Memorial Bridge and steps in relation to the Lincoln Memorial. It was noted his plan provided for a retaining wall to connect the bridge and the Rock Creek Parkway, and small steps leading down to the river. The Commission felt that this further emphasized the importance of giving the bridge a good hold at the abutment.

Mr. Pope said he did not favor the small steps, but agreed about giving the bridge a good hold on the shore.

A further inspection was then made of the model; a number of pictures illustrating the project and the Plan of Washington were noted; and thereupon the meeting adjourned for luncheon.

Mr. Moore said the Commission of Fine Arts would meet at 2:00 p.m. for further consideration of the subject, with a view to reaching a conclusion in the matter.

The Commission reconvened at 2:15 p.m. Mr. Vitale pointed out that the Commission of Fine Arts has met the recommendations of the National Capital

Mr. Delano: Then take up the question of the size of the floor.

The plan drawn by Rollin, Reed and White was then inspected. Mr. White said the post office steps in New York City are 500 feet wide; the original design of the steps provided for 250 feet width; now these have been reduced to 200 feet. An open space is provided at each end of the steps as at Park Ave.

Mr. Vitale: I would rather see the tunnel right straight through. to which Mr. Delano agreed, omitting the green shown in the model on each side of the steps; or else have a sloping retaining wall on each side of the steps.

After further consideration Mr. Morris and Mr. Delano suggested the possibility of making the steps so as to allow for a roadway at the foot of the steps and bringing them back, possibly 50 feet into the plaza.

Thereupon Mr. Partridge submitted a study made by Mr. Bacon showing his idea of the treatment of the Memorial Bridge and steps in relation to the Lincoln Memorial. It was noted his plan provided for a retaining wall to connect the bridge and the Lock Green Parkway, and small steps leading down to the river. The Commission felt that this further emphasized the importance of giving the bridge a good hold at the abutment.

Mr. Pope said he did not favor the small steps, but agreed about giving the bridge a good hold on the shore.

A further inspection was then made of the model; a number of features illustrating the project and the plan of Partridge were noted; and thereupon the meeting adjourned for luncheon.

Mr. Moore said the Commission of Fine Arts would meet at 4:00 P.M. for further consideration of the subject, with a view to reaching a conclusion in the matter.

The Commission reconvened at 2:15 P.M. Mr. Vitale pointed out that the Commission of Fine Arts has met the recommendations of the National Capital

Park and Planning Commission by providing an Underpass, which ought to settle the traffic problem. Now there is here, he said, a difference of opinion as to the steps. Some definite conclusion ought to be reached. Orders have gone ahead for construction work at the head of the bridge, without the question of the steps being settled, and this would seem to be a matter to take up with the architects of the bridge.

Mr. Morris said he did not favor Mr. Delano's solution, nor did he think Mr. Greenleaf's suggestion altogether satisfactory. It was agreed that the arch recommended for the abutment of the bridge should be retained.

Mr. Moore then asked for a vote on the elimination of the wall and advocating the steps. This was agreed to unanimously.

The Commission thereupon recommended a sloping wall on each side of the steps, connecting with the bridge on the one side and the Parkway connection on the other.

Mr. Delano said he was conceding to the steps but wanted a roadway at the foot of the steps. The Commission agreed to this.

Mr. Vitale then urged that consideration be given to the pylons,-that they be in scale; that the bridge should have a good hold at the abutment, omitting the green or open space on each side of the steps (shown in the model) and instead have a sloping wall; use colored stone he said if necessary. Mr. Vitale pointed out that the traffic problem here at the Lincoln Memorial is not the same as at 42d Street and Fifth Avenue; yet there on holidays or other celebrations traffic is diverted to Madison Avenue and other streets at such times temporarily. In his opinion the traffic problem at the Lincoln Memorial was exaggerated.

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At such times temporarily. In his opinion the traffic problem at the or other celebrations traffic is diverted to Madison Avenue and other streets is not the same as at 42d Street and Fifth Avenue; yet there on holidays Mr. Fitzie pointed out that the traffic problem here at the Lincoln Memorial and instead have a sloping wall; use colored stone be said if necessary, omitting the grass or open space on each side of the steps (shown in the model) they be in scale; that the bridge should have a good hold at the abutment.

Mr. Fitzie then urged that consideration be given to the pylons--that at the foot of the steps. The Commission agreed to this.

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The Commission thereupon recommended a sloping wall on each side advocating the steps. This was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Moore then asked for a vote on the elimination of the wall and that the arch recommended for the abutment of the bridge should be retained. think Mr. Greenleaf's suggestion altogether satisfactory. It was agreed

Mr. Morris said he did not favor Mr. Delano's solution, nor did he a matter to take up with the architects of the bridge.

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of opinion as to the steps. Some definite conclusion ought to be reached.

Now there is here, he said, a difference

Park and Planning Commission by providing an Underpass, which ought to

Mr. Moore said he had come to feel the same way in view of what he recently heard about the Lee Highway, which has so often been advocated in connection with this project. Mr. Moore said there is absolutely no positive assurance that it will be built and connect with the bridge in the near future. Also, Mr. Moore said, it should not be forgotten that the Potomac River, coming down from the Key Bridge past the Lincoln Memorial, passes through park land, with parkways that are being developed on each side of the river.

Thereupon the conclusions reached in the consideration of this project were reviewed, and the recommendations agreed upon were formulated for a report (Exhibit A) to the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission, as follows:

1. Reasonable reduction is to be made in the width of the steps (175 feet were mentioned, but it was thought best to leave this question with the architects of the bridge to determine on the exact width of the steps)

2. Retaining walls on each side of the steps joining them with the parapets of the bridge and the Rock Creek Parkway connection.

3. Omit the tunnel under the steps.

4. Move the steps back as far as the granite work of the bridge will permit. (Possibly 20 feet it was estimated, but is to be decided by the architects

5. The arch under the abutment of the bridge to be cut at right angles with the bridge, with a corresponding treatment of the arch under the Rock Creek Parkway connection.

6. Arrange for roadway at the foot of the steps, connecting the arches. This driveway to be considered as part of the architectural scheme rather than as a roadway in the true sense.

7. From this lower level of the steps, a study should be made of supplementary steps to care for the rise and fall of the water.

8. If it should be found necessary to care for the flotsam and jetsam, it should be provided for by an architectural barrier to be in harmony with the scheme of the composition.

~~The Commission adjourned at 5:20 p.m.~~

2. ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wm. Adams Delano was unanimously elected Vice Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, succeeding Mr. Jamet L. Greenleaf, whose term of service as a member of the Commission has expired.

3. PRESENT FROM THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA: Under date of March 12, 1928, a letter was received from Lieut. Col. U. S. Grant 3d, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capitol, requesting the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts as to the location of an urn, which he understood had been presented by the Republic of Cuba, on the occasion of the President's recent visit there, as follows:

March 12, 1928.

"Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman,
Commission of Fine Arts, Subject: Monument presented by Cuba.
Interior Building,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Moore:

I am sending you herewith a drawing of a monument which I understand was presented by the Republic of Cuba on the occasion of the President's recent visit there. The President has asked me to find a suitable location for it, and before making any suggestions I would like very much to have the benefit of your advice.

It has often occurred to me that some ornament would be very appropriate at the west end of the rose garden. Of course, anything put in this place should be rather in the form of a bench with an architectural back, on which people could sit and look out over the rose garden. This monument is not of the proper shape for this, but might very well indicate a focal point for some such eliptical or circular bench. I have been able to think of no other place where this monument would be in a location reasonably appropriate to it and at the same time express our appreciation of the gift. Of course, in the doing over of the Mall several minor monuments will have to be moved to other places, and I suppose that new sites for such less important ornaments will be created. This gift might be taken advantage of to start some such rearrangement of the minor monuments in the Mall."

Sincerely yours,
U. S. Grant 3d,
Director."

The Commission noted the sites suggested,-in the Rose Garden, of Potomac Park, and the Mall. The Commission, after consideration, approved the location of this monument in the Rose Garden, but recommended that,

before placing it there, the Rose Garden be redesigned. (Exhibit B).

4. SUCCESSOR TO MR. HOWBAY: The Commission took up the question of a successor to Mr. Howbay, as painter member of the Commission of Fine Arts. Prof. Eugene Francis Savage, Professor of Painting, School of Fine Arts, at Yale University, and Mr. Ezra Winter, Painter, 15 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York City, were considered. The Commission decided unanimously that they would recommend Mr. Winter for appointment as the painter member of the Commission.

The Commission adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The Commission were the guests of Mr. Cass Gilbert and Mr. Louis Ayres at luncheon at the Century Club.

COPY

March 15, 1928.

Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission,

Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

At a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts in New York City today, which was attended also by former architect members of the Commission and Mr. Olmsted, former landscape architect member, very careful consideration was given to the question of steps and underpass for the Arlington Memorial Bridge. The Commission have come to the following conclusions and make these recommendations:

1. Reasonable reduction is to be made in the width of the steps.

2. Retaining walls on each side of the steps joining them with the parapets of the bridge and the Rock Creek Parkway connection.

3. Omit tunnel under the steps.

4. Move the steps back as far as the granite work of the bridge will permit.

5. The arch under the abutment of the bridge to be cut at right angles with the bridge, with a corresponding treatment of the arch under the Rock Creek Parkway connection.

6. Arrange for roadway at the foot of the steps, connecting the arches. This driveway to be considered as part of the architectural scheme rather than as a roadway in the true sense.

7. From this lower level of the steps, a study should be made of supplementary steps to care for the rise and fall of the water.

8. If it should be found necessary to care for the flotsam and jetsam, it should be provided for by an architectural barrier to be in harmony with the scheme of the composition.

Very respectfully yours,
Charles Moore, Chairman,
FOR THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS.

EXHIBIT A

COPY

March 15, 1920.

Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission,

Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

At a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts in New York City today, which was attended also by former architect members of the Commission and Mr. Olmsted, former Landscape architect member, very careful consideration was given to the question of steps and underpass for the Arlington Memorial Bridge. The Commission have come to the following conclusions and make these recommendations:

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3. Omit tunnel under the steps.

4. Move the steps back as far as the granite work of the bridge will permit.

5. The arch under the abutment of the bridge to be cut at right angles with the bridge, with a corresponding treatment of the arch under the Rock Creek Parkway connection.

6. Arrange for roadway at the foot of the steps, connecting the curves. This driveway to be considered as part of the architectural scheme rather than as a roadway in the true sense.

7. From this lower level of the steps, a study should be made of supplementary steps to care for the rise and fall of the water.

8. If it should be found necessary to care for the flotsam and jetsam, it should be provided for by an architectural barrier to be in harmony with the scheme of the composition.

Very respectfully yours,

Charles Moore, Chairman,
FOR THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS.

EXHIBIT A

COPY

March 16, 1920.

Dear Colonel Grant:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting in New York City yesterday, considered your letter of March 13th and the drawing submitted therewith of a monument which you understand was presented by the Republic of Cuba on the occasion of the President's recent visit there.

The Commission approve your suggestion that the monument be placed in the Rose Garden (Potomac Park), but before placing it there the Commission recommend that the Rose Garden be redesigned.

The drawing is herewith returned.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

H. P. Caemmerer,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Lieut. Col. U. S. Grant 3d, Director,
Public Buildings and Public Parks
of the National Capital,
Washington, D.C.

Exhibit B

Exhibit D